SAND IN THE WHEELS

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TOBIN IN PROGRESS

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Tobin Tax: The Towns Enter the Fray

Following Geneva last week, the Italian town of Genoa has tabled a motion in favour of a Tobin Tax. With the town of Arcata in the United States, and up to now fifty or so townships in France, we can talk about the beginnings of an international network of 'Tobin towns'.

What is it that is motivating these towns to take up a formal stance on a process which is basically international and macro-economic?

The original conference at Morsang in France brought to light a formula which could well explain the motivation behind this budding network: the desire to become actors in the process of globalization, instead of its inevitable passive victims. From the autumn onward, a good fifteen conferences will be held in different regions and towns of France, on themes developed at Morsang, both to "anchor" these in the different social contexts, and to take reflexions a step further on. The resistance front is widening, to include different actors, from the individual citizen to the township, and sometimes embracing a much wider region, as in Brazil, with the state of Rio Grande do Sul and the town of Porto Alegre.

In France, the Economic and Social Council has recently pronounced in favour of a Tobin tax. This Council, in its report, just published, on the state of affairs in the first half of the year 2000, pronounces in favour of setting up a mechanism such as the Tobin tax. This tax was first imagined by the economist and Nobel laureate James Tobin, with the aim of taxing change operations, so as to fight against speculative movements of capital. The Economic and Social Council, which advises the government, esteems that governements must acquire the "capacity to limit the volatility of movements of capital".

Subject: "State of affairs in the first half-year 2000". Ballot on opinions with regard to the project as a whole (opinions favourable to the installation of a mechanism such as the Tobin tax). Number of voters : 163
For: 103
Against: 22
Abstentions: 38

Now it is the turn of the Town Council of Genoa to vote and approve a motion to levy a tax on financial transactions, and in particular a Tobin tax. Below is the official text, translated from the Italian. The original text can be found on the Carta website (carta.org), and more particularly on www.carta.org/genzia/index.htm , with a commentary by the Vice-President of the Township of Genoa, Antonio Bruno.

The Town Council of Genoa has approved the following motion (with the abstention of the Alleanza nazionale, Lista Sansa, Forza Italia and Liguria nuova).

The Town Council, considering that since financial globalization increases economic insecurity and social inequality, duping and humiliating the decisions of the people, of the democratic institutions and of the sovereign States responsible for the general interest, it is necessary and possible for the citizens to make public

interest prevail over the interest of the financial markets and multinational enterprises; engages the Mayor and the council to obtain that the Italian government and members of the European Parliament uphold and endorse the following proposals :

- that a tax be levied on all financial transactions, particularly those based on speculation, and that the revenue from this be directed to the fight against inequality and unemployment.

- that this tax be accompanied by measures of transparency and the dissuasion of financial criminality and tax havens, above all those situated in Europe.

- that the Government take an exemplary initiative in this direction, opening a debate on these themes in Parliament and in the country, and demand that they be put on the agenda of an ordinary, or special, meeting of the European Council.

- that the Government refrain from signing any agreement or treaty of the type Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) or the Transatlantic Economic Alliance (TEP), which weakens democratic sovereignty in favour of the transnational economic and financial sphere.

- that the Central European Bank be subject to the political control of Parliament and of the governments of the European Union.

For more information, you can contact glocal@attac.org or consult the Internet website http://attac.org/glocal

Tobin Tax: Does the UK government soften is position ?

Steve Tibbett War on Want Senior Campaigner noticed that at least is tone has done so. Peter Hain (Foreign Office Minister) is from the left of the Labour Party and has previously advocated the Tobin Tax in a book. Tony Colman is close to the government.

Hansard extract from an Adjournment debate in the House of Commons, 11/07/00, tabled by Tony Colman MP on the Geneva Social Summit and the Tobin Tax.
Mr. Tony Colman (Putney): The Canadian delegation took the lead at the summit by tabling a call for such an investigation, while the EU delegation, including the UK, supported it. Paragraph 111 emerged at the end of the negotiations. It states that the Governments agree to conduct:

"A rigorous analysis of advantages, disadvantages and other implications of proposals for developing new and imaginative sources of funding, both public and private, for dedication to social development and poverty eradication programmes."

Therefore, a study will be authorised, without dissent by the member countries of the UN, into a currency transfer tax--the Tobin tax--and other potential sources of revenue for social development. The form of words in paragraph 111 was agreed as a compromise that will enable a broader study. The Canadian delegate spoke at the final plenary, partly to say explicitly that the intention behind the paragraph is that a study of the currency transfer tax should be made.
Clearly, that could be the start of more effective global public management of the international financial system. Given that the UK, through the EU, supported an investigation of the currency transfer tax, what does the Minister believe is the first step in such an investigation? What do the Government intend to do?

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Will they work with the EU on proposals for the high-level intergovernmental event on financing for development, which will be held in 2001? Could a paper be tabled before Parliament before that event to enable a full parliamentary debate to take place. Do the Government intend to consult with financial institutions and academics--and NGOs, especially the Association pour la Taxation des Transactions Financieres pour l'Aide aux Citoyens and War on Want, on the advantages, disadvantages and other implications of a Tobin tax?

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Peter Hain): My hon. Friend the Member for Putney (Mr. Colman) is an excellent parliamentarian. I know that, because he is my Member of Parliament. I thank him for providing me with the opportunity to discuss the follow up to the World Summit for Social Development. I welcome the special expertise that he has brought to the debate and the energetic way in which he is following matters through, which is extremely helpful both to the House and the Government. He has identified the importance of such issues.

My hon. Friend asked several interesting questions, to which the Government will provide written responses in due course, and I shall arrange for those responses to be placed in the Library of the House of Commons. However, I shall deal with four of his points now. He mentioned a currency transaction, or Tobin, tax. I have seen his early-day motion, 920, and his letter to the Financial Times. The special session agreed to analyse proposals for developing new and innovative sources of funding for social development, and one of those proposals is likely to be a tax on international currency transactions.

The Government believe that a so-called Tobin tax could have several serious drawbacks. In particular, it might introduce economic distortions into the international financial system, and it is unlikely to be effective in a crisis. It would also be practically impossible to achieve global coverage, and there would be huge scope for avoidance. Unless those drawbacks can be overcome, a tax on currency transactions will not be a viable source of funds for social development. Nevertheless, it is an important proposal, and the Government will be interested to see the results of an analysis of such proposals in the months ahead.

Mr. Colman : As London is the world financial centre, rather than waiting for conclusions, might the Government be willing to take the initiative for such an investigation, examining both disadvantages and advantages, much as we have led on the HIPC initiative?

Mr. Hain : I shall obviously consult ministerial colleagues who have direct responsibility for the matter, and I shall ensure that my hon. Friend's request is brought to their attention. We recognise that the issue must be examined carefully to ascertain the progress that can be made. I welcome the energy that he has contributed to the debate.

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Building a World of Citizens

One Year after Seattle
International Gathering in Paris
La Grande Halle de la Villette,
Paris30 November-2 December 2000

The Seattle summit a year ago was a turning point and a springboard. A turning point, because it revealed a new capacity at a global level to oppose a process that many considered unstoppable. A springboard, because it enables us to set other dynamics in motion.

Headed together down this road, in the diversity of our beliefs and mobilisations, we are motivated by the importance of the necessary work: inventing alternatives to the current, neoliberal form of globalisation and translating these alternatives into concrete proposals.

Our task is an urgent one. The commodification of every area of life, in every nook and cranny of the planet, is leading to devastation that we cannot accept.

We have come together in a collective made up of 10 organisations, foundations, grassroots movements, journals and newspapers, and we are taking an initiative to invite all the discontented, indignant, even rebellious people in the world who are looking for other possibilities for human development, whether their particular approach is to regulate, humanise or go beyond capitalism. In short, we are inviting everyone who is trying to invent a different future, obviously through a variety of forms of philosophical, political and civic involvement.

This diversity of individual contributions will allow this gathering to be a fruitful one, to be a decisive moment in the post-Seattle period, and to push forward a peoples' counter-offensive against neoliberalism, through the connections we make and the richness of our discussions and contributions about possible alternatives.

As mobilisations grow, we are called upon to take the initiative in putting forward proposals.

See you in Paris, so that we can share our experiences and ideas on how to build a democratic world of citizens.

Actuel Marx, Attac, Cimade, Copernic, Espaces-Marx, Jean Jaurès Foundation, Friends of Le

Monde Diplomatique, League for Education, Globalisation Observer, Christian Witness.

I want to get information above the preparation and the programme of this meeting
Name :
Adresse :
Please return to : Secretarait de la Rencontre Internationale, 64 Boulevard Blanqui, 75013 Paris.
www.postSeattle.org
infos@postseattle.org

Prague, 26 September 2000

For the 26th of September - Global Day of Action:

We (INPEG) do not support the initiation of any violence against people, animals or property. At the same time we support citizens' democratic rights to demonstrate. We oppose any measures taken by any authorities to prevent people from exercising this right.

+ In the morning there will be AUTONOMOUS non-violent actions around Prague with the aim to raise awareness and to disrupt the IMF/WB conference. It was discussed that much of this will consist of creative non-violent action with the theme of carnival with the purpose of outreach (i.e. - puppets, music, theatre, art, etc.)

+ In the afternoon, there will be a non-violent MASS ACTION OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE with an aim to stop the IMF/WB.

+ The non-violent action of civil disobedience will be announced publicly months ahead, as we have nothing to hide and we don't see any legitimacy in the existence of the IMF/WB.

In Addition to the 26th of September:

- Counter Summit – Sept 22 –24 will explore issues of globalization
- The Art of Resistance - Sept 22 - 24 in conjunction with counter summit - political arts festival with, theatre, music, dance, exhibitions etc.
- Continued non-violent Protest Actions - Sept 27 – 28

INPEG is a coalition of individuals and organisations, created to co-ordinate the anti IMF/WB protests. Thus far it includes various anarchist, ecologist, socialist, and Christian groups that have come together around the concept of uniting for justice against the World Bank and IMF. .

The work of INPEG has included so far: Solidarity demonstration with A16, information stalls (two every week, one in Prague and one in Brno). Preparation of speaker tours in the summer, one done in Bratislava (Slovakia), Mainstream media communication so far

Counter Summit

Report: Aim to introduce critical views and alternatives to the IMF/WB polices as the main pillars of capitalist globalisation and to the contradictions of the capitalist system to the general public in the Czech Republic. The Counter Summit will work closely with the Art of Resistance festival.

When ? : The Counter Summit will take place from September 22nd-24th

Where ?: 3 venues have been secured: - - Domovina, Cultural House, out of the centre. Reserved for 23-24.9. Capacity 500 people for 10 hours a day. - - Charles University, Faculty of Philosophy, in a centre close to the Old Town Square. Reserved for 23,24. 9 whole day. Capacity: 440 people - - Cinema "Aero", out of centre, reservation 22nd-24th, 8:00 to 17:00 capacity 360 people. Several other places are in negotiation (university buildings, church...). Venues will be clarified in 2-3 weeks.

Who?: Several speakers have been contacted and proposed. Contact the organisers for the list or if you want to help out in contacting people E-mail for counter summit: countersummit@yahoo.com

Political Art Festival - "the Art of Resistance"

The aim of the festival is to give a cultural input in the political activities: summit, protest, direct actions, outreach. And to organise some public events for the general public: concerts, performances in a political context. So far only little has been prepared as there was no-one to work on it. People willing to work on it have just settled down in Prague. CONTACT: kreaktivni@excite.com

INPEG is in urgent need of money. Their bank account is currently in minus. The amount of money to be raised for the minimal infrastructure and activities is: 30.000 DM. Have raised 8.500

DM: Other applications are still out and waiting for confirmation if granted or not.

Money is needed for everything: printing costs, travel for people from Southern Countries, IMC, office space etc etc. CALL for people outside of CZ to make donations urgently. Please send donations to: ipb, CS.amrmady35, 160 00 praha 6, bank account: 163775396/5100 swift code: inbaczpp In order to avoid bank fees, you can send smaller amounts of money to a postal address which will be communicated soon and posted on the inpeg site.

People willing to make grant applications should get in touch with: vanja@aseed.antenna.nl

NEXT EUROPEAN MEETING:

We decided to have another European meeting. The confirmed date is 17-20th August. Contact prague2000_cz@hotmail.com for details

http://www.x21.org/s26/

Melbourne, 11 September 2000

SHUT DOWN THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

SEPTEMBER 11-13, CROWN CASINO, MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

CALL TO ACTION! CALL TO ACTION! CALL TO ACTION! CALL TO ACTION!

On September 11-13th, the World Economic Forum (WEF) will hold its Asia-Pacific Economic Summit. Like the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the IMF/World Bank, the World Economic Forum is a means of promoting economic and social policies that will benefit the rich and the powerful at the expense of the majority of the world's people and the environment.

Participants are being lured to the summit with the opportunity to meet "at a time when the eyes of the world will be fixed on Australia, and coordinate their participation in the Summit with the Olympic Games." Members of the WEF include Amcor, BHP, BP, Boeing, Citibank, Commonwealth Bank, Cheveron, Dow Corning, Dupont, Exxon-Mobil, General Motors Holden, McDonald's,Microsoft, Mitsubishi, Monsanto, Nestle, Nike, Publishing & Broadcasting Ltd., Rio Tinto, Shell, Siemans, Westfield, Western Mining.

COME TO MELBOURNE!

s11 will be a kaleidoscope of actions, conferences and workshops united in opposition to the current policies of corporate globalisation and the WEF.

This is a worldwide call to action, inviting social justice/human rights/animal rights/peace activists, workers/students/trade unionists/environmentalists/indigenous groups/artists/community campaigners/consumer advocates/citizens and all people who are concerned about the violence and inequality of the globalised economy.

LINKING ARMS

The s11 Alliance is a network of organisations, affinity groups, and individuals that all share a common concern about the growth of corporate power and the direction of globalisation. We are one of the main groupings organising a week of cooperation, networking and protest action against the WEF. We encourage everyone who is concerned about the direction of globalisation and the actions of the WEF to join our network and/or organise actions on and around September 11. We will provide support and assistance to anyone attending the s11 actions.

ABOUT THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

The WEF is an exclusive, un-elected, invite-only organisation. It is a "think tank" and a driving force behind the global economy. Its members include the CEOs from the top 1000 multi-national corporations in the world. A select list of academics, trade-ministers, heads of state, and elite media will also attend as guests.

The WEF holds its annual meeting in the small ski resort town of Davos in the Swiss Alps. According to the WEF this meeting is now considered the global summit that defines the political, economic and business agenda for the year. The WEF's summits allow the richest and most powerful corporations in the world to mingle with trade representatives from nations, and with each other, to make business deals and determine global political and economic policies.

According to the WEF, it initiated the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the focus of protest in Seattle last year. Its 1982 annual meeting in Davos brought together cabinet members of major countries with heads of international organisations, such as the World Bank, IMF, and

GATT. This special Informal Gathering of Trade Ministers from 17 countries organised the launch of the Uruguay Round, which is where the WTO was founded. This is just one significant example of how the WEF, driven by its corporate agenda, shapes the political, economic and social landscape.

The World Economic Forum is an extremely powerful and unaccountable body who are making major decisions about what we will read in the media, what food we will eat, what we will study in school, where, when and in what conditions we will work; almost every aspect of our everyday life.

Our actions against the WEF are the beginning of communicating our struggles, learning to co-operate, and working towards an alternative to the violent world order that enforces exploitation and inequality across the globe.

STAND UP FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE!

s11 Schedule: September 7-11

7th) Thursday: Melbourne Convergence! People from around Australia and the world will arrive in Melbourne to gain cohesion, build community, network and plan for the week of s11. Keep an eye on the website for up-to-date information or call us for assistance with accommodation, resources and transport.

8th-10th) Friday-Sunday: Network Counter-Summits, forums, workshops and networking, parties and actions. A range of organisations will be hosting discussions on globalisation - discuss the problems, plan resistance. The convergence will continue with trainings and briefings for the big day.

11th) Monday: s11 - SHUTDOWN THE WEF!

!!PROTEST AT CROWN CASINO!!

A cascade of *RALLIES*BLOCKADES*DIRECT-ACTIONS*MUSIC*THEATRE*!

12th-13th) Tuesday-Wednesday: Further actions to be announced as they develop

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